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ABSTRACT

A study investigated the effectiveness of a program for the development of literacy skills among low-achieving kindergarten students. The targeted population consisted of those identified as most at risk in the kindergarten classes at Willard Elementary School located in South Elgin, a village south of Elgin in northern Illinois. The problem of low achievement in literacy skills was documented through interviews with kindergarten students, teacher observation checklists and teacher journal entries. Analysis of the probable cause data revealed that a lack of skill development among low-achieving kindergarten students may be related to dysfunctional families, poverty, poor health, English as a second language, poor parenting skills, poor alternative childcare and inadequate funding for education. A review of curricular content and instructional strategies revealed a lack of planning for and delivery of literacy skill development. Solution strategies suggested by knowledgeable others, combined with an analysis of problem setting, resulted in the selection of two major categories of intervention. The Literacy 2000 Reading Series was used to implement a program of mini-lessons designed for development of literacy skills. These books were also used to foster enthusiasm for reading through an independent reading program. Post-intervention data indicated an increase in various literacy and book handling skills as well as enthusiasm for learning to read. (Contains 10 references and 10 tables of data. Appendixes present data, interview questions, and an informed consent form.) (Author/RS)

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ED 386 689

LITERACY DEVELOPMENT AMONG LOW ACHIEVING KINDERGARTEN STUDENTS

by

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master's of Arts in Teaching and Leadership

Saint Xavier University & IRI/Skylight
Field-Based Master's Program

Action Research Project
Site: St. Charles, IL.
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Abstract

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DATE: May 1995

TITLE: Literacy Development Among Low Achieving Kindergarten Students

ABSTRACT: This report describes a program for the development of literacy skills among low achieving kindergarten students. The targeted population consisted of those identified as most at risk in the kindergarten classes at Willard Elementary School located in South Elgin, a village south of Elgin in northern Illinois. The problem of low achievement in literacy skills was documented through interviews with kindergarten students, teacher observation checklists and teacher journal entries.

Analysis of probable cause data revealed that a lack of skill development among low-achieving kindergarten students may be related to dysfunctional families, poverty, poor health, English as a second language, poor parenting skills, poor alternative childcare and inadequate funding for education. A review of curricular content and instructional strategies revealed a lack of planning for and delivery of literacy skill development.

Solution strategies suggested by knowledgeable others, combined with an analysis of the problem setting, resulted in the selection of two major categories of intervention. The Literacy 2000 Reading Series was used to implement a program of mini lessons designed for development of literacy skills. These books were also used to foster enthusiasm for reading through an independent reading program.

Post intervention data indicated an increase in various literacy and book handling skills as well as enthusiasm for learning to read.

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Chapter 1

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND COMMUNITY BACKGROUND

General Statement of Problem

A minority of kindergarten students at Willard Elementary School in South Elgin, Illinois are not adequately prepared to learn to read by the end of the kindergarten year. Evidence for the existence of this problem includes results of literacy and skill assessment, teacher observations, the historic use of standardized testing, and the historic use of developmental programs designed to address this need.

Immediate Problem Setting

Willard Elementary School is located in South Elgin, Illinois, a distant suburb of Chicago. It is a neighborhood school and all students live within walking distance. The racial/ethnic population of Willard students is 83.2 percent White, 7.4 percent Asian/Pacific Islander, 6.1 percent Hispanic, and 3.3 percent Black. The percentage of students from low-income families is 5.8 and the percentage who have limited English proficiency is 5.1. The attendance record is 96.6 percent and no chronic truancy is reported. The intra-year transfer rate is 16.8 percent. Average class size is 28 at the kindergarten level, 32 at the first grade level, 23 at third grade and 21.5 at the sixth grade (School Report Card, District U-46, 1994).

Willard is approximately forty years old, and its 15 classrooms, learning center, computer room, gymnasium, kitchen, and offices are attractive and in good repair. The playground is the smallest of all elementary schools in the U-46 School District. Willard has 2 male teachers and 12 female teachers, only 3 of the group are under the age of 40. Willard is served by a full-time principal, and special psychological, social, or learning disability problems are referred to district resources.

Description of Surrounding Community

Willard School is one of 43 schools in District U-46. This district is the second largest in the state of Illinois and is centered in Elgin. It includes the smaller communities of South Elgin, Streamwood, Bartlett, Wayne, and Hanover Park. Elgin was founded in 1854 and is about 45 miles northwest of Chicago. The district is in an economically diverse community with an adequate industrial base. Very affluent areas are present, as are substandard neighborhoods suffering with poverty and crime. Loss of economic stability and growth is evident in the downtown section of Elgin where many businesses have failed. The increase in juvenile gang activity and the increasing crime rate are popular topics in local newspapers. Many citizens look to the possibility of economic relief from a major casino gambling project recently built in Elgin.

The total enrollment in the U-46 District in 1993 was 28,400, and in that year the operating expenditure per pupil was slightly less than the State average (School Report Card, district U-46, 1993). The

District includes 32 elementary schools, 6 middle schools, and 3 high schools. The administrative structure consists of the superintendent, with three area superintendents working under him, and principals at each of the 41 schools. More than 50% of the teaching staff have master's degrees or beyond (School Report Card, District U-46, 1994).

The Superintendent of School District U-46 informed teachers at the beginning of the 1993-1994 school year that the district's goals were to find ways to improve student achievement in all academic areas. This forum, attended by administrative leaders and teaching staff, was a declaration that current performance based on standardized testing results was not considered adequate. Specific reference was made to published 1993 data from the Illinois Test of Basic Skills (I.T.B.S.) and the Illinois Goal Assessment Program (I.G.A.P.). At the sixth grade level the District score for reading achievement was 264 on the I.G.A.P., ranking just above the state average. The sixth grade score for reading achievement at Willard was identical to the District average. In the state of Illinois, 24 percent of all tested sixth grade students did not meet the state goals for reading achievement while 48 percent did meet these goals and 27 percent exceeded them. In District U-46, 21 percent of tested sixth grade students did not meet these goals, 53 percent met them, and 26 percent exceeded them. Willard School had fewer students who did not meet these goals than both the state and the district but also had fewer who exceeded them. Sixteen percent of Willard's students did not meet the State goals for reading achievement at the sixth grade level. This statistic was not acceptable and necessitated new efforts to develop ideas which would

contribute to the process of reading development at early grade levels (School Report Card, District U-46, 1993).

The IGAP sixth grade reading scores for the following year showed an even higher percentage of Willard students who did not meet the state goals for reading achievement (Table 1). However, compared with the district and state scores, Willard had fewer students not meeting these goals. Willard had about the same number meeting the state goals and more than the state and district who exceeded these goals (School Report Card, District U-46, 1994). The message from the superintendent was that all children must succeed and that test scores must improve.

Table 1

IGAP Sixth Grade Reading Scores
1993-94

	%Do not meet goals	%Meet goals	%Exceed goals
Willard	20	45	35
District U-46	25	46	29
Illinois	25	48	27

The Illinois Goal Assessment Program Summary distributed by U-46 School District in the Fall of 1994 compares scores between 1990 and 1994. It provides mean scores for individual schools as well as mean scores for the district and state and the 1990 mean scores for the nation. Willard third grade reading scores vary from lows of 237 in 1990 and 1994 to a high of 270 in 1991. Since 1991 scores have declined with each score lower than the previous year. In 1990 the third grade score for the nation was higher than any score achieved by

Willard third grade students since 1990. The Willard sixth grade reading scores have fluctuated somewhat from year to year with the most dramatic improvement occuring in 1994. The State mean scores also improved in 1994 and the national mean score for 1990 was slightly above the state score, below the district score but higher than the score at Willard. In 1990 the lowest mean score for Willard occurred and the highest score occurred in 1994 (Table 2 below).

Table 2

I.G.A.P. Mean Reading Scores

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
Third Grade:					
Willard	237	270	256	248	237
District U-46	245	245	240	244	254
Illinois	257	249	247	245	254
United States	250				
Sixth Grade:					
Willard	243	259	247	264	281
District U-46	257	259	252	264	267
Illinois	249	253	244	259	263
United States	250				

In September of 1994, the U-46 School District distributed information comparing the I.T.B.S. scores between the school years 1991-92 and 1993-94. The Willard sixth grade reading scores declined each year while the district scores remained slightly more constant and the fluctuation was no more than 2 to 3 points different between the years reported.

Table 3

I.T.B.S. Reading Scores

	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94
Willard	53.1	51.0	50.9
District U-46	51.9	53.4	51.5

In March of 1994 a referendum with important implications for special programs in the 1994-1995 school year was rejected by District U-46 voters. The following are among the effects of this: larger class sizes; a 50% reduction in time scheduled for music, physical education, and art; and diminished services to gifted, learning disabled and speech and language impaired students. Less money is available for purchasing learning materials or for maintaining building and grounds. Of particular concern to kindergarten and first grade teachers has been the cancellation of the Developmental First Grade Program which had been operative in the District for more than 20 years. It is difficult to say what effect the failed referendum will have on the District's stated goals, but certainly the challenge to improve reading skills in kindergarten will be even greater with the absence of the developmental first grade.

Regional and National Context of the Problem

The State of Illinois passed School Report Card legislation to focus attention on improving our schools. Elementary and secondary teachers have been asked to assist in establishing the objectives for this project which shall address reading skills. This legislation emanates from a national concern for lack of student achievement in

reading and other areas described in A Nation At Risk (The National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1984). This report, published during the George Bush presidency, declared that scores from standardized testing studies were extremely low in comparison to other industrialized nations. It is implied that any nation not generally well-educated is placing its future existance in jeopardy.

In 1989 President George Bush appointed a commision to investigate the status of children in the United States. In 1991 this National Commission on Children published Beyond Rhetoric: A New Agenda for Children and Families (Clinton, et al., 1991). This report summarized a 2 1/2 year study that found a system in which some students are able to flourish, but in which many others simply cannot. It proposed an agenda that embraces the principle that every American child should have the opportunity to develop to his or her own potential. Responsibility for meeting this challenge was to be shared by parents, community institutions and government at all levels. The authors of Beyond Rhetoric state that the overall performance of United States students on tests for reading achievement has not improved markedly over the past decade. According to the authors of this study, there is no greater injustice than to deprive children of the opportunity to acquire critical knowledge and skills. The future of these children as well as society may be jeopardized if we fail to assure every American child the opportunity to develop to their full potential.

Many parts of the educational process may be ripe for new ideas, and the teaching of early reading skills may be among the most important areas. "While a country receives a good return on investment

in education at all levels from nursery school and kindergarten through college, the research reveals that the returns are highest from the early years of schooling when children are first learning to read" (Anderson, et al, 1985, p. x). It has been suggested that unless reading skills are adequate early in a child's education, efforts at teaching, other, later forms of higher level concepts may not be successful and may lead to greater expenditures (Clay, 1991). The fact that there are so many young children having so much difficulty learning to read is surprising. Holdaway (1979) expresses the notion that the early experience of learning to read should be a joyful experience and wonders what must have gone awry.

Progress in education must come where it is needed, and where it is needed most is in fundamentals. As expressed above, what is accomplished later depends on what has successfully been learned at the earliest levels. That the mastery of early reading skills is basic to whatever is meant by higher level education should be self evident to anyone who contemplates it even for a moment.

Chapter 2

PROBLEM EVIDENCE AND PROBABLE CAUSE

Problem Evidence

That some kindergarten students will lack sufficient first grade preparatory reading skills at the end of the kindergarten school year is substantiated by past experience, by teacher observation and impression, and by the use of skill assessment tools. Past use of a developmental curriculum for students not considered ready for first grade, and the criteria used to identify these individuals provides solid testimony to a lack of first grade readiness. In the 1993-1994 school term there were 12 developmental first grade programs serving 32 grade schools in the U-46 District. Between the years 1977 and 1993 no fewer than three and no more than eight children were placed from Willard into the Developmental First Grade program. The children placed in these programs were considered not ready for standard first grade curriculum with respect to reading readiness, mathematics readiness and other developmental areas. They were essentially being provided an "extra" year of 1st grade, a year in which fundamental readiness skills could be more fully developed.

To be placed in the developmental program, a student finishing the kindergarten year had to demonstrate an intelligence

quotient in the normal range, but must have had low percentile performance on the CogAT test (Cognitive Abilities Test, 1988) and must have been referred to the learning disabilities testing program. If the learning disability professionals through their testing determined that the child was significantly below skill level, the recommendation for the developmental program was made to the parent or guardian. The fact that this program no longer exists is not due to the sudden disappearance of kindergarten students who lack first grade readiness, but, as mentioned earlier, to a failed referendum and financial problems within the District.

Past policy in District U-46 has been to give the CogAT in March at kindergarten, third, and sixth grade levels. In March of 1994 the failed referendum meant there would be no developmental first grade program in the 1994-1995 school term. The decision, by District administration, was therefore not to give the CogAT in March of 1994 to kindergarten students as there would be little practical value. Prior to March of 1994, however, mainly through teacher observations and impressions, identification of students whose skills seemed below level was occurring.

During the school year 1993-1994, a group of kindergarten children was identified as at risk of failure should they be placed in the regular first grade program. This group, identified by the classroom teacher based on observation and impression, was characteristically typical of groups identified in previous years. During the first few weeks of school the kindergarten teacher referred seven children for testing for language deficiencies. The Speech and Language Specialist

found all had serious deficiencies. These students met criteria for receiving special help and were given sessions with the speech and language professionals individually or in small groups throughout the kindergarten year. Progress was continuous and remarkable for some but all remained below age and grade level expectancy through the end of the kindergarten year.

In March of 1994, five of the seven who received speech and language services were brought before the Willard Service Team to discuss how to help these children and what to recommend for grade level placement for the school year, 1994-1995. Observation by the kindergarten teacher showed that these students lacked readiness for the tasks usually associated with first grade reading. The team recommended that further investigation be undertaken by the Learning Disabilities Specialist, the School Nurse, and the Social Worker. Because of financial constraints, the Learning Disabilities Specialist was limited to doing an educational screening rather than a full case study. But the Learning Disabilities Specialist confirmed what the kindergarten teacher had observed and had informally tested. Ability levels for the five students were low average or average, and language and visual motor skills were weak. It was difficult for these children to listen, follow directions, or stay on task. All were able to recognize their names but were unable to identify the names of the letters of the alphabet. These students clearly lacked readiness for first grade and would have qualified for special programming had such been an option in the Fall 1994 term.

Between September 6th and October 14th, 1994, an evaluation of

reading readiness was performed on 53 beginning kindergarten students at Willard School. This evaluation consisted of four components: an observation checklist of book handling skills drafted by the kindergarten teacher (Appendix A); a checklist of color, shape, and letter and word familiarity, also drafted by the kindergarten teacher (Appendix B); a beginning of year reading interview (Fisher, 1991) (Appendix C) and teacher journal entries. Based on this evaluation, 9 students were identified as being at risk of not achieving readiness for first grade reading programs. Results of the 3 quantifiable components are shown below. The teacher's journal entries are consistent with these findings.

Table 4

Composite of Selection Instrument Scores

Student	Book-handling	Color, Shape, letter, word	Interview	Total score
#1	3	6	0	9
#21	1	5	1	7
#32	1	5	1	7
#38	1	5	0	6
#41	2	6	1	9
#42	1	6	1	8
#44	2	6	1	9
#47	0	5	1	6
#50	1	5	1	7

The observation checklist of bookhandling skills contains 15 items and each item is scored as a point. The range of scores for the total group of 53 was 0 to 15. As is shown in Table 4, of the 9 at risk students, the majority received only a 1 or a 2. The mean for the total group was 8.7 as compared to 1.3 in the at risk group, and the

median for the total group was 10, as compared to 1 in the risk group.

The checklist of color, shape, letter, and word familiarity contains 6 items, each with a weighted value of 3. This scale, which measures the most immediate components of reading readiness, therefore has a potential range of from 0 to 18 points. For the purpose of identifying the at risk group, it represents 50 percent of the point range. The actual range for the total group was 5 to 16, while in the at risk group all 9 individuals received either a 5 or a 6. The mean for the total group was 9, and was 5.4 in the at risk group. The median for the total group was 8.5, as compared to 5 in the at risk group.

The beginning of year reading interview actually consists of 4 sections. The first section is not scored, but is used to "warm up" the student. The second section on reading at home, the third section on general knowledge, and the fourth section on the child's personal reading are each scored a single point. The range of this tool is therefore 0 to 3. As can be seen in Table 4, no student in the at risk group received a score higher than 1.

The total score is the sum of the 3 qualitative components of this evaluation. All students scoring fewer than 10 points are included in the at risk group. Teacher journal entries would only be used to eliminate a student from the low scoring group if some special consideration warranted it such as English as a second language. In this case there were no eliminations and so the at risk group is identical with the lowest scoring students. In terms of the total score composite, the mean for all 53 beginning kindergarteners was 19

as compared to 7.5 for the group identified as at risk, and the median, 20, as compared to 7.

Further observations in the at risk group are that language and motor skills are below the average, listening skills are weak, the ability to follow directions is not well developed, and staying on task is difficult. These observations are consistent with those noted by the teacher in previous years.

In summation, the historic presence of special developmental programs, teacher impressions, and a variety of testing tools suggest the conclusion that some kindergarten students fall short of the first grade reading norm. These students can often be identified early in the kindergarten program, and past methodologies for building both skills and interest in reading have been less than adequate for this group. Given the current educational philosophy, that quality can be continually improved, it follows that new experiments in teaching early reading readiness are essential.

Probable Cause

In assessing probable causes for Willard School kindergarten students who tend to lack solid reading readiness skills for the first grade curriculum, an analysis of situations of the students from the 1993-1994 school year who would have been referred to the developmental program shall be presented. Local demographics reflecting on probable causes, and somewhat mirroring the individual cases will then be presented. An examination of the wider scope of the problem shall then be offered through a review of pertinent literature.

Cases which would have been appropriate referrals to the

developmental program had it existed for the 1994-1995 term shall be reviewed in terms of family economics, single parent situations, minority status, circumstances in the home, and for the presence of hyperactive or perceptual characteristics. It is apparent that in two of five cases the family income was less than the community norm. Also, in two of five cases there was a single parent in charge of the family. In regard to racial and ethnic breakdown, two of five cases are from groups designated as racial minorities. In one instance there was a bilingual factor in that one child was only slightly more proficient with English than with Spanish. In the category termed "circumstances in the home," the attempt has been to make a probable determination as to whether a circumstance exists which would diminish one on one educational time in the home. This could relate to work situations of the parents, the constituency of individuals considered to be members of the home, or the presence of social problems within the home. In all of the five cases being reviewed one or more of these situations is present. In the category of hyperactive or perceptual characteristics, evidence either confirmed by a physician or other health care organization, or validated by the kindergarten teacher through continual observation is considered. In four of five cases this phenomenon was present.

Factors somewhat unique to Willard and for which causative impact is difficult to determine have to do with immediate area housing construction and class size. Much housing construction is occuring in the Willard School area and enrollment is increasing. The kindergarten class size is well above the district and state averages. While the

district had an average kindergarten class size of 24.3 and the state had an average of 22.7, in May of 1994 Willard had an average of 28 (School Report Card, District U-46, 1994). A teacher assistant was warranted in the kindergarten class for the past three years due to class size. An assistant is hired after a class enrollment of 30 children is established. The obvious effect of having large numbers of children in the classroom is the decrease in amount of time the teacher is able to spend on each individual child.

Professional research suggests many of the same causes for low achievement in early grade level literacy skills as may be contributing to the "at risk" groups identified in recent years in the U-46 District, and at Willard School. Sociological concerns among the experts include concerns about the effects of poverty on the growing child (Price & Stevens, 1992). Poverty may be the cause of health problems that have negative effects on the child's ability to learn. Others blame poor and inadequate systems which do a poor job of financing education (Scherer, 1993). Schools are also blamed for lack of innovation (Castle & Watts,1992; Haberman,1991). The perils of not facing these challenges are present everywhere in our culture's daily rhetoric.

In 1985 The National Academy of Education, The National Institute of Education and The Center for the Study of Reading published Becoming A Nation Of Readers: The Report of the Commission on Reading. In this work, authorities on the subject of reading presented interpretations of the research to date. These interpretations were designed to give educators assistance in making decisions that would

improve reading instruction and reading achievement. They did not dwell on the reasons for the decline in test scores but offered brief explanations for why the United States students tested poorly. It was suggested that a combination of factors was responsible. An "erosion" of educational standards, an increase in television viewing, changes in family structures, shifts in young people's motivations, and the fact that larger numbers of youths from less advantaged families have been staying in school and taking the tests are all among factors given. The importance of the family and early intellectual development is unquestioned. Lack of time, energy and skill keeps some parents from accomplishing this goal. "When students come to school without the proper intellectual nurturing in the home, they have an enormous deficit to overcome" (Pogrow, 1992, p.626). According to the authors of Beyond Rhetoric: A New American Agenda for Children and Families, "To develop as human beings children need love, attention, understanding and support from adults" (Clinton et al., 1991, p.16). One in four children live in single parent homes and 58 percent of children under six have mothers who work outside the home. Some children are born to teenage mothers who are unprepared for the responsibilities of parenthood. Children at all income levels are deprived of the time, attention and guidance they need from their parents or other caring adults (Clinton, et al., 1991).

According to Howe (1992, p.192), "Poverty is the parent of school failure". In the United States there are vast economic disparities among families and communities. One in five children lives in poverty. The negative effects are well-documented. Brandt suggests that "...no

one doubts the challenge of educating children who are tired, hungry, and perhaps abused, children who may have no permanent home and who seldom have the kind of interaction with supportive adults so necessary for mental and moral development in their growing years" (1989, p.3). Many are undernourished, inadequately clothed and improperly housed. These children experience the most health problems but have the least access to medical care. Their families experience the most stress but have the fewest social support systems. They are at the highest risk of academic failure and yet many of them attend the least successful schools (Clinton, et al., 1991).

While there are some valuable educational offerings, television is more often cited as a barrier to a child's education rather than a resource for enriching the process. The National Endowment for Children's Educational Television supports the development of educational programs. The value of such programs as Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood or Sesame Street is generally unquestioned. However, many programs entertain but do not educate (Clinton, et al., 1991). Some may be inappropriate or even harmful. Furthermore, the advertising seen by the children has a potentially damaging effect. The Federal Communications Commission has reviewed policies governing the commercialization of children's television and offered guidelines for restraint. The National Commission on Children recommends that television producers give more serious consideration to the content of children's programs and to the amount and type of advertising aired during their showings (Clinton et al., 1991).

According to Bracey (1992) more children than ever are falling

behind grade level. Those most affected are the children of the poor and minorities. Whenever city test scores are disaggregated by ethnic group, the advantages of White students over Black and Hispanic students is disproportionately large. This statistic is especially serious since the proportion of all United States children who are minorities is growing so that one third of America's young people will be of minority status by the turn of the century. Many refugees need to acquire English as a second language in a spirit of acceptance and encouragement. Using diversity as an excuse for discrimination and exclusion must end. "Cultural diversity is one of America's greatest riches; it must be respected and preserved while at the same time ensuring that all children have an equal opportunity to enter the social and economic mainstream" (Clinton et al., 1991, p.49). Haberman (1991) points out that it is still too easy to blame the victims instead of the system. He says the real reform must be in our attitudes.

As has been suggested through a review of factors in the U-46 District and at Willard School, and as is represented in research literature, there are likely many causes of developmental insufficiencies in education. A case by case analysis of Willard students determined to lack sufficient reading skills at the end of the 1993-1994 school year suggests that local causative factors may closely coincide with those in the recent literature. Developmental problems, broken families, and cultural socio-economic influences are all probable negative influences on this problem. At any one time and in any one case a variety of conditions may be operative when a student

fails to attain norms in the process of learning to read. Certainly the problem is present at hand and calls for the community of educators to recognize potential problems case by case, and to use all that is possible creatively to improve the present situation.

Chapter 3

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Review of the Literature

According to Anderson, Hiebert, Scott and Wilkinson (1985), school failure at the earliest levels is not inevitable. Low achieving kindergarten students can achieve the literacy skills necessary to successfully learn to read in first grade. What solutions offer the best means of assuring success? Some of the currently popular ideas are not yet adequately researched but merit discussion because they have become central to many of the educational issues in the United States. Solutions in this category include reduction in kindergarten class size, retention programs, and whole day rather than half day kindergarten programs. These solutions shall be discussed, but are not currently options available to the kindergarten teachers in District U-46. This discussion will be followed by an examination of three models of reading instruction: a teacher-directed approach including an emphasis on phonics, the whole word alternative or look-say, and the whole language system. The advantages or disadvantages of each will be weighed before determining whether it could serve as a possible solution to the problem of how to help underachieving kindergarten students.

Slavin, Karvert and Wasik (1993) report that some of the popular ideas for preventing early school failure have not proven to be as successful as predicted. A politically popular idea has been to reduce class size in the lower elementary grades. Decades of research has established that small reductions such as from a class size of 25 to 20 has no significant impact on improvement of literacy skills. However, a larger reduction such as from 25 to 15 may have a significant impact (Price & Stevens, 1992). This is a costly alternative and most public school systems have chosen not to reduce kindergarten class sizes to this level.

Retention by adding another year of education between kindergarten and first grade has frequently been used to help prepare the low achieving child for learning to read in the first grade. However, this solution has received mixed reviews with some arguing that it has not been a successful practice (Slavin, Karweit & Wasik, 1992). First grade test scores for those retained in kindergarten or for those who attended a two year developmental kindergarten or transitional first grade, showed these students appeared to gain on achievement tests in comparison to other students in the same grade but not in comparison to agemates. Furthermore, the apparent gains did not carry over to the following years, thus long term benefits were not evident. Moreover, it was found that these students were far more likely than similar nonretained students to drop out of school (Smith, 1992).

Another idea that has been under discussion throughout the United States is whether a full day of kindergarten would be an effective means of helping children avoid failure in the first grade. At risk

children who attended full day programs had better test scores at the end of the kindergarten year than children who attended half day programs (Slavin, Karweit & Wesik, 1992). However, these gains no longer existed by the time the children completed first grade.

Models of Reading Instruction

The first of the three models of reading instruction under discussion is the teacher-directed model. This has been the method most often used by teachers in the United States. A basal reader system such as the Scott, Foresman program, and the Ginn program offers reading selections for kindergarten through eighth grade students (Smith, 1992). These include a teacher's manual which outlines the scope and sequence the teacher is expected to cover. Workbooks and worksheets are also used to give students practice in skills considered essential to the process of learning to read.

Phonics instruction about the relationship between letters and sounds is an important part of teacher-directed basal systems. Those who propose a strong phonics approach justify its use by pointing out that the English language is based on the alphabetic principle that written words are composed of sequences of letters corresponding to phonemes of spoken words (Griffin & Olson 1992). Often these letter-sound relationships are taught through guided practice sessions or drills rather than from within the context of reading and meaning. It is thought that teaching letter names and sounds helps children establish the relationship between sound segments and letters. Phonemic awareness assists beginning readers by helping the student examine language independently of meaning and to manipulate its

component sounds (Cunningham, 1988). Lower levels of awareness would allow identification of rhyming words and lead to the ability to blend sounds into words and eventually the reader would be able to isolate speech sounds. Phonemic awareness enables the reader to use letter-sound correspondence to read and spell. In order to read a word never read before, a reader must be able to blend the sounds and decipher the word. Early phonics ability has been found to be a powerful predictor of later reading achievement (Cunningham, 1988). Since young children have been found to be successful in learning to segment spoken words into phonemes (Yopp, 1988), the direct teacher proponents strongly recommend its use.

The goal of sustained direct teacher instruction is that transfer of learning will take place. Students and teachers are focused on a common goal or objective and the students are aware of why they need to accomplish this goal. Teachers model and explain and then the students are guided to apply what they have learned. Utilization of this process is thought to indirectly promote reading comprehension. Proponents of this method believe that low aptitude children and children with impoverished literacy backgrounds are especially unlikely to figure out effective strategies by themselves and thus the need for direct instruction. The system of direct teacher instruction has the advantage of allowing the teacher to immediately assess whether or not learning has taken place by observation of the student during the practice segment of the lesson. More practice may be assigned if the goal has not been achieved. Historically, phonics instruction has been the cornerstone for teaching reading to the young reader. Teaching the

sounds of letters is as old as organized reading instruction (Howe, 1991). In 1952 Rudolph Flesch provoked great public debate on the importance of phonics instruction with his book, Why Johnny Can't Read. Then in 1967, Jeanne Chall wrote Learning to Read: The Great Debate which was very influential in professional circles. Her book reported that programs that included phonics as one component were superior to those that did not and she reported that phonemic awareness was a powerful predictor of later reading achievement, even more reliable than intelligence test or general language assessments (Smith, 1992). Poor readers were described as lacking phonemic awareness and good readers as able to apply phonemic awareness to build word recognition. According to Smith many teachers assumed that this meant that "more was better." More worksheets were distributed; more drill was used, and more time was spent on phonics instruction.

Those who questioned the overemphasis on phonics pointed out that those who learn to read despite phonics made the teaching of phonics look good (Smith, 1992). It was pointed out that the rules of phonics are complex and sometimes unreliable and there are 300 correspondences between letters and sounds in the English language. Some youngsters, including those who are bilingual, have a particularly difficult time learning to read phonetically because it is more difficult for some to identify separate speech sounds (Smith, 1992). So much emphasis on phonics makes reading seem more a process of decoding symbols into sounds rather than a process of gaining meaning. The goal of phonics instruction was to examine language independently of meaning and learn to manipulate its component sounds (Cunningham, 1988). It was noted

that some who experienced difficulty became resistant to the drudgery of drill and guided practice worksheets and displayed signs of frustration over their lack of success (Anderson et al., 1985).

In 1985 members of the Reading Commission reviewed current research to determine how helpful phonics instruction is, and how phonics should be utilized in the teaching of reading skills. They found that children who are taught phonics learn to read more successfully than children who are not taught phonics. According to their report, Becoming A Nation Of Readers, the goal should be to make phonic skill application automatic and to do so it should be connected with meaningful content. They suggested that it was important to "overlearn" the lower order phonic skills and that the maxim for teaching phonics should be: "Do it early and keep it simple" (Anderson et al., 1985). At the kindergarten level this means teach letter names and sounds within a meaningful reading context. Phonics instruction is often a key component for reading programs that adhere to the structured methodology of the direct teacher model.

The direct teaching model is teacher-centered rather than child-centered. However, children do not need the same instruction at the same time in the same sequence. Those students who are at risk of failure find the repetition and difficulty boring and discouraging. Student time spent on learning is therefore counterproductive (Butler & Turbill, 1984).

The second model of reading instruction that will be examined is referred to as the "whole word" or "look and say approach." During the first third of this century, educators such as William S. Gray

advocated the approach termed look and say (Anderson et al., 1985). It was thought that children would make more rapid progress in reading if they learned to identify whole words. The idea was that the more words children know, the easier it is to recognize and learn other words based not on sound correspondence but on syllabic and semantic resemblances (Smith, 1992). Learning to read was considered a matter of learning to identify more and more written words, just as learning to talk is basically a matter of learning the meanings and uses of more and more spoken words. Reading vocabularies were controlled in the basal readers to facillitate this process. Teacher manuals presented a specific scope and sequence for the teaching of reading vocabulary, and workbooks offered opportunities for guided practice and teacher assessment of student progress (Anderson et al., 1985).

Critics of the look and say method of reading instruction state that "children can not learn to recognize enough whole words to become readers if they are expected to learn lists of words in advance of reading" (Smith, 1992). Deciding in advance which words the individual child shall learn conflicts with the notion that the look and say approach teaches children to read naturally. Spoken words are learned in a context which is meaningful to the individual. In contrived reading programs, children are expected to learn to read the words on the vocabulary list that accompanies the selection they are about to read. Holdaway says that:

> Two unfortunate practices became set during the reign of the look and say approach: new words were taught in isolation from a meaningful context before reading took place and the concept of

controlled vocabulary changed the character of books for reading instruction in ways which distorted and impoverished the language quite grossly (p.28, 1979).

The third model of reading instruction to be examined is referred to as the whole language approach. In Great Britain it is called "real books" but it is also known as literature based learning, language experience or emergent literacy (Fischer, 1991). The underlying principles are the same. Trusting children to learn and guiding children toward seeing themselves as readers is central to the concept. The teacher's role is to encourage and assist students to develop their individual literacy skills. According to Fischer, the whole language approach is based on respect. This respect includes respect for learning that is "natural and authentic" and respect for the learner engaged in meaningful and productive activities (Butler and Turbil, 1984; Cambourne, 1988; Clay, 1991; Fischer, 1991; Goodman, 1986; Newman, 1985; Strickland and Morrow, 1989; Weaver, 1990).

Whole language enthusiasts say children learn best from positive relationships with teachers, classmates and with what they are learning. "That we learn from the company we keep is common everyday wisdom" (Smith, 1992, p. 432). Learning is seen as social and developmental through demonstration and collaboration rather than as a consequence of instruction and practice. Children are encouraged to be "risk takers" through their choices. The child sees himself as a member of a "community of learners" and views progress in terms of self rather than in comparison with others.

A whole language program is described as child-centered. Children

learn to read and write by reading and writing. They depend on prior knowledge and experience to make sense of the text. Students are encouraged to predict, select, confirm, and self-correct as they seek to make sense of print. Fischer describes three language systems that interact and are not separated for instruction (1991). These include: the graphophonics or sound and letter patterns, syntactic or sentence patterns and semantic or meanings. Comprehension is always the goal of reading activities in the whole language classroom. Literacy skills are built on what the learner already knows, and are taught during functional, meaningful, relevant language experiences. There is no hierarchy of sub-skills and no universal sequence. Literacy develops in response to personal and social needs. The teacher motivates, arranges the environment, monitors development, provides relevant and appropriate materials. Learners focus on the reading process as communication of meaning with the motivation for learning to read as always being intrinsic. Children in a whole language classroom learn to read and write because they need and want to participate in the communication process of reading and writing. Extrinsic rewards and punishment have no place in a whole language program. The curriculum is described as child-centered, integrated, and literature-based, one in which children learn by doing (Cambourne, 1988).

An important learning activity in the whole language classroom is referred to as shared reading. At shared reading time, the teacher demonstrates the reading process and the entire class participates in a variety of language activities. Songs, poems, chants, and big books are enjoyed and discussed. Most of the books have enlarged print so

the children can see the text as the teacher points to the words which are read. Shared reading sessions are lively but relaxed, noncompetitive, and always focused on what is being communicated. Although it appears that the children are singing or reading in unison, individual children are participating according to their own developmental level and with their individual style. Each child is engaged in approximating and self-correcting to make sense of the text. Shared reading offers continuous opportunities for the development of reading skills and strategies. These strategies are ways to establish patterns of learning that will help the learner get meaningful content from the text. The teacher demonstrates skills in support of these strategies (Fischer, 1991).

Holdaway suggests four factors of emergent literacy that four, five and six year olds display, and that are important for the teacher in a whole language classroom to understand. These factors comprise what he terms the "literacy set." They include: motivational factors, linguistic factors, operational factors and orthographic factors. Motivational factors refer to the children's enjoyment and appreciation of books and other work in print. Linguistic factors refer to the child's ability to become familiar with written dialect in oral form as they hear the patterns of written language. Operational factors involve the essential strategies for handling written language, such as self-monitoring, predicting, and understanding story structure. Orthographic factors refer to print, reading left to right, letter knowledge and phonetic principles (Holdaway, 1979).

Shared reading provides opportunities for convincing children that

they can be readers, and encourages them to read in a success-oriented climate. The teacher accepts all approximations as children read. Books need to have high interest value and provide a strong story line. Predictable books with rhyme, rhythm and repetition are key features of shared reading books (Fischer, 1991).

Big books are often used as a vehicle to focus the children's attention on the print, however, any book can be used. Sometimes the children make their own books following the structure and shape of a favorite story (Graves, 1983). In the shared reading of any book, children should feel they will be supported until they become so familiar with the story and how it works that they will be able to read it successfully for themselves (Mooney, 1990).

The shared book experience was developed by teachers of young children in New Zealand, and was inspired by the traditional bedtime story. According to Holdaway these read aloud sessions provide the ideal setting for positive, satisfying exchanges between individuals. He says that "from the child's point of view the situation is the happiest and most secure in his experience" (1991, p.39). The New Zealand teachers found that by enlarging the book and placing it on an easel, they could recreate the bedtime story for an entire class.

Why is the shared reading system proposed? According to Staughton (1993) it can be adapted for children of all abilities and all levels of literacy development. For those children who know a lot about the reading process, shared reading can foster more mature reading habits. Repetition and predictability of the process are good for those with language delays while the average and below average children exhibit

positive responses to the modeled approach because it makes use of their abilities, the material is easy to "memorize" and it allows children to gradually attend to graphic symbols (Strickland & Morrow 1989). Beginning readers are able to process the printed page in the same way a mature reader does. All children are guided in a natural acquisition of literacy.

A comparative study was done by Stice and Bertrand (1989) to determine the effects of a whole language approach compared to a traditional skills approach on the literacy development of at-risk first and second graders. Fifty first and second grade students were involved in the study, 25 in whole language classrooms, and their matches in traditional skills classrooms. The study included both rural and inner-city children who were deemed at risk. Quantitative and qualitative measures were used to compare the two groups. Scores on the reading portion of the Stanford Achievement Test (Primary I and II), responses to a concepts about print survey, analysis of an oral reading and retelling test, writing samples, and individual interviews constituted these measures. On the Stanford Achievement Test, the whole language children showed slightly greater gains than the traditional group, but the gains were too slight to be statistically significant. While the children in the whole language groups scored lower on the Concepts About Print Pretest, they scored significantly higher on the posttest. The children in whole language classrooms did as well on traditional spelling as their counterparts, and used more invented spellings. Whole language children offered significantly longer, more complete versions of the stories they retold, suggesting

that their comprehension might have been better. Data from reading and writing interviews revealed several trends. Children in whole language classrooms had a greater awareness of alternative strategies for dealing with problems encountered when reading. The whole language children suggested six strategies, while traditional children suggested three. Whole language children appeared to feel better about themselves as readers. Ninety-five percent of whole language children reported "me" when asked, "Who do you know who is a good reader?" Only five percent of the traditional children reported themselves. Whole language children appeared to focus more on meaning and the communicative nature of language, and developed greater independence in reading. The researchers concluded that whole language is a viable alternative to traditional instruction for young children at risk. Another study was done to learn how the whole language approach works with learning disabled children. Hollinsworth and Reutzel report that the children in the whole language classrooms were helped to feel successful as readers and were willing to take the risks important to the task of learning to read. Many of the reported benefits of whole language that exist for all children were observed as being benefits for the learning disabled student. "Learning disabled children can best learn to read and write in much the same way they learned to speak. The language disabled child learns naturally from exposure to print rather than from isolated instruction and drill" (1988, p. 46).

According to Smith, "Methods can never assure that children learn to read. Children must learn from people" (1992, p.440). He points out that we must trust children to learn. In answer to the question of

how to help low achieving at risk students, he says that the best we can do is "promote interest and competence in literate activities". He claims that if certain children are doing "less well in school," that this is not an indication of disabilities or special needs, (1991 p.441) but that this is an indication that they must be shown more patience and sensitivity.

Project Outcomes and Solution Components

As a result of the shared reading approach during the period of October 1994 through January 1995, the low achieving kindergarten students will develop literacy skills as measured by an observation checklist of book handling skills (Appendix A), a checklist of color, shape, and letter and word familiarity (Appendix B), a beginning of year reading interview (Appendix C), and teacher journal entries. In order to accomplish the terminal objectives, the following procedures are proposed:

1. The teacher and students will sit close together and read together daily.
2. Children will be encouraged to participate and become engaged in the reading process by reading in unison with others.
3. The teacher's enthusiasm and presentation style will demonstrate the joys of reading and what a skilled reader does with text.
4. A range of genres will be used including poems, rhymes, songs, traditional tales, contemporary stories and nonfiction.
5. Readings will be repeated at daily shared reading times.
6. Stategies and skills will be introduced and practiced in the context

of reading a story.

7. The Literacy 2000 books will provide models for writing, illustrating, and publishing individual stories, cooperative group stories, or class stories.

8. Students will take the Literacy 2000 books home to read with their parents.

Action Plan for the Intervention

Having completed a pre-evaluation to determine which students are low achieving, daily shared reading time shall take place from October 17th, 1994, to January 20th, 1995. All students, those identified as underachievers, and regular students will participate in the project together. Discussion will be designed to arouse the students interest and motivate them to use their developing repertoire of reading skills and strategies. The childrens' attention will be drawn to the cover of the book and predictions shall be made anticipating the story line. After the title, author's name, and illustrator's name have been acknowledged, the children will discuss experiences that link the books with experiences they have had in their own lives. The title will be reread and the illustrations discussed. All opinions and comments will be accepted and the students will be assisted to consider details that will help them in making further predictions about the story line. As the pages are turned, the children will be invited to talk about what they see.

The next step shall be reading the story to the children while pointing to the words. The story will then be reread with the children invited to read along with the teacher. They will then be provided time

to read, pretend read, or in some other way experience the book. This may occur independently or in cooperative groups. The same book shall be read again on a later date with more of a focus on features to note in context such as letter/sound relationships, punctuation, and supportive structures of language. These supportive structures may be such things as rhyme, rhythm, repetition, and figures of speech. Responses anticipated and encouraged from the students may be descriptions of feelings generated from the reading, comments on what most interested them, or ways in which they may have told the story differently had they been creating it.

Following the second reading of a story or piece, other activities related to it shall be provided. These shall take the form of making related art or craft items, writing activities, or engaging in dramatizations of parts of the story.

Methods for Assessment

As described in the section above, the observation checklist of book handling skills; the checklist of color, shape, and letter and word familiarity; and the beginning of year reading interview, shall be administered to both morning and afternoon kindergarten classes at Willard school. This involves an evaluation of 53 students if class sizes remain constant, and will be performed between September 6th and October 14th, 1994. Teacher journal entries relating to reading related and other academic observations shall be made throughout the course of the research period. Between January 9th and February 3rd, 1995, the two checklists and the reading interview shall be

administered again.

An analysis of the improvement of performance shall be done on all students. A more detailed analysis shall be done on students representing the low end of the evaluation. The evaluation data shall measure the progress of these low end students over the course of the shared reading experience, and shall also measure their performance in relation to the average performance of the rest of the group.

Chapter 4

PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Description of Intervention

The objective of this project was to determine if the shared reading approach, using the Literacy 2000 Reading Series, could serve as a viable means for development of literacy skills of students who may be at risk of not gaining readiness for first grade reading programs. This project was based at Willard Elementary School in South Elgin, Illinois. Assessment processes were used to identify the at risk group. The Literacy 2000 Reading Series was used to implement the shared reading program through daily group experiences, independent reading time and reading to parents at home.

During the first few weeks of school, various schedules and routines were established that were maintained throughout the intervention period. This schedule allowed time for whole group reading experiences often followed by individual or small group assigned tasks, time for independent reading and time for conferences. During the preintervention period between September 6 and October 14, children were assessed and a target group of at risk students identified. The intervention period began with the introduction of the Literacy 2000 books and the use of the shared reading approach and

occurred between October 17, 1994 and January 6, 1995. A program to involve parents was employed in November called "Bag A Book." The Literacy 2000 books were taken home and shared with parents. Between January 9 and February 3, all children were reassessed using the same procedures and tools used during the preintervention period. The results will be examined to determine what, if any, effects the shared reading approach and the Literacy 2000 Reading Series might have on the literacy skill development of the lowest achieving kindergarten students.

Fifty-three Willard Kindergarten children were assessed through the use of evaluation tools consisting of four components. The first was an observation checklist of book handling skills (Appendix A). The second was a checklist of various skills including color and shape identification, letter recognition, letter and sound association and the ability to read words on a Kindergarten Basic Sight Vocabulary List (Appendix B). The third component was an interview about reading (Appendix C) and the fourth component consisted of entries in a teacher journal.

Book handling skills were evaluated during the whole group reading time and during independent reading time. As the teacher watched and interacted with the children, various book handling skills were noted and recorded on an observation checklist. Trade books, including big books, were introduced during the first weeks of school. The children used these books to demonstrate their ability to find the title, author's name, front of the book and back of the book. Whole group reading time also provided opportunities for observation of listening

skills. Child created books along with trade books were useful in determining other literacy skills. As the child read and pointed to the text, it was possible to see if the child was able to point to the words from left to right and whether the pages were turned from left to right. The child created books were especially useful in allowing the teacher to observe if the spoken word matched the written word, whether the child understood how to read from the top of the page to the bottom of the page and whether the child noticed the pictures as being important to understanding the story. A class book created by cooperative groups of children proved useful when evaluating the child's ability to retell a story. Observing independent reading time gave the teacher the opportunity to note if the child seemed to enjoy looking at books and whether they engaged in pretend reading.

Children were assessed during the daily scheduled conference times. The teacher took note of various skills and concepts included on the checklist as well as other specific information about literacy skills not accomodated by the checklists. Any information not recorded on checklists was recorded in the teacher journal. The children were asked to identify basic colors and shapes, upper and lower case letters, letter and sound association and basic sight vocabulary words. The Reading Interview (Appendix C) was also given to all students at conference times. After some general questions were asked, the children responded to questions in three different categories. The first questions were about the reading that takes place in the home. The second group of questions asked about general reading knowledge. The third category of questions pertained to whether the student

considered himself or herself a reader and, if so, how this was learned. All responses were recorded verbatim.

On September 17, the Literacy 2000 series of books was introduced. The books were chosen according to how well the books supported the curriculum and how well they seemed to fit the particular needs of the children. Several books had color themes. Other books had topics consistent with social studies and science units being taught. A range of genres was presented to the children including narratives, poems, rhymes, songs, traditional tales, contemporary stories and nonfiction.

At daily shared reading time, the teacher sat on a chair with the children sitting as close as possible on the surrounding floor. Each book was presented with the emphasis on enjoyment. The teacher demonstrated what a skilled reader does when reading. The book's title, author, illustrator and illustrations were always noted. Since the stories are short, they were read at least twice and often repeated in the days and weeks that followed. The children were always encouraged to read along as the teacher pointed to the words. High frequency words, punctuation, speech bubbles, repetition, rhyming words, letter and sound associations and other aspects of format were presented within the context of the story.

All children participated in the daily shared reading experience. Each responded according to individual needs and readiness. The at risk group of lowest achieving kindergarten children were not singled out or placed in a separate group. The lowest achieving kindergarten students participated along with their classmates. This target group of children were encouraged to learn according to Smith's (1992)

principles: all children must be trusted to learn, children learn from people, and teachers must promote interest and competence with patience and sensitivity for the most at-risk members of the class.

Following the shared reading time, the children were guided to develop their literacy skills through a wide variety of activities and materials. Sometimes the children read to each other in pairs. Cooperative group activities gave the children the opportunity to create collabortively. These activities sometimes led to the publication of group or class stories. Books were also published by individuals. The children were asked to write about their experiences in their personal journals as well as the formal journal kept in their portfolio. Art activities often had labels that were connected to some shared reading experience. These labels served as reading material that the children could read when the products were displayed on bulletin boards.

During independent reading time, children were encouraged to select reading materials according to interest. Some chose to read with others and some chose to read to themselves. The children were able to choose books from the Literacy 2000 collection as well as from trade books, class books or books written and published by classmates. Other reading material included language experience charts, poems, labels or songs printed on large paper.

After November 11, 1994, the children began taking the Literacy 2000 books home to read with their parents. The system was called Bag A Book since the books were placed in a plastic bag along with laminated instructions for parents and a construction paper rectangle.

The instructions gave parents suggestions on how to encourage their child's growing literacy skills. The parent was asked to assist the child to write the title of the book and the child's name on the rectangle. When the book was returned, the rectangle was displayed on the window to suggest a book cover. The kindergarten children watched the display of construction paper books grow bigger every day. The responsibility for checking out the books belonged to the children. They removed a check out card from the pocket inside the cover of the book they had chosen to take home. They signed their own name and then deposited the card in a pocket with their name and picture on the front. These Bag A Book pockets were located by the door on the front bulletin board so that there was easy access when the child entered the room at the beginning of each day. This display allowed the teacher to see at a glance if the child had checked out a book and which one they were responsible to return. Most books were checked out and returned on the next school day so that a new book could be taken home each day.

Reading skill assessments were done at the conclusion of the intervention period between January 9, 1995 and February 3, 1995. The assessment tools and the procedures for using them remained the same as those used at the beginning of the school year. The children were observed during shared reading time, activity time and independent reading time. Conference time was used for individual assessments and for giving the reading interview. Anecdotal entries were added to the teacher's journal that were pertinent to the individual child's developing literacy skills. The data recorded will be used to determine to what extent the shared reading approach and the Literacy

2000 series of books were able to effect the desired changes among those in the group of at risk kindergarten students.

Presentation and Analysis of Results

In chapter 2, 9 of 53 students were identified as possibly at risk of not achieving readiness for first grade reading programs. Identification of these students was based on use of the 4 assessment tools as previously described. The following analysis of the progress of these students is based on comparisons of original assessments performed between September 6th and October 14th, 1994, and then repeated, following the shared reading experience. The post assessments occurred between January 9th and February 3rd, 1995.

For purposes of this analysis, the 53 students shall be divided into 2 groups. The first group shall consist of the 9 at risk students, sequentially renumbered 1 through 9; and the second group shall consist of the 44 students excluded from the at risk category. A discussion of the specific performances of the 9 at risk students shall be presented first. Discussion shall then be followed by a comparison of progress of the at risk group to the progress of the group of the 44 excluded students. The second analysis shall attempt to measure the performance of the first group relative to the second. In other words, to determine if, through the shared reading process, the at risk group gained on, maintained its distance to, or fell further behind the larger group. This study shall consider the shared reading process successful to the degree it has contributed to the first 2 of these possibilities.

Performance of the At Risk Group

The checklist of bookhandling skills measures the students familiarity with the main instrument of reading, the book. The student is asked to identify parts of a book such as the front, back, title, print, and author name. The student is also observed for sequencing skills such as turning pages in order, following words left to right and top to bottom, and matching a word as read to its printed counterpart. The engagement of the student is assessed by determining if he or she listens to and mimics the reading process. The students enjoyment and comprehension are also components of this scale. Table 5 shows the performance of the at risk students on the 15 components of this checklist at the beginning and at the end of the shared reading experience (specific performance of each of the 9 students is included in Appendix A).

Table 5

Scores on Bookhandling Checklist

Student	Pre-test	Post-test
#1	3	13
#2	1	11
#3	1	11
#4	1	8
#5	2	13
#6	1	13
#7	2	13
#8	0	10
#9	1	14

It is clear from Table 5 that the 9 at risk students had minimal familiarity with books as they entered the kindergarten schoolyear. Mean performance of the group rose from 1.3 to 11.7 over the course of

shared reading period. This is an impressive increase as it implies these students have begun, in a fairly comprehensive way, to understand books as functional objects essentially related to their efforts to become readers.

For 12 of the 15 components on the bookhandling checklist, significant change occurred with at least a majority of responses moving from the "no" to the "yes" rating. The change was less impressive in the 3 components presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Bookhandling Components Showing Least Improvement

Component	Pre-test "Yes"	Post-test "Yes"
Notices pictures	6	9
Moves finger from top to bottom of page	0	3
Matches spoken word to written word	0	0

Table 6 shows that 6 of the 9 students were interested in pictures by the time of the pre-test period. This was the highest scored item on the checklist at that time. The 3 students who lacked this interest in the early fall had gained it by the following January. At pre-test, none of the 9 students moved their fingers from the top to the bottom of the page when indicating reading directionality. Only 3 students tested successfully for this component following the shared reading period, even though the similar directionality component of moving finger left to right moved from 0 to 6. There was no

improvement in the component which requires matching the spoken to the written word as read. This more progressive component is apparently well beyond the abilities of this group at this stage.

The checklist of color, shape, letter, and word familiarity (Appendix B), has 6 skill areas, each with an array of questions. The student is presented with and asked to identify 8 colors, 5 shapes, 26 upper case letters, 26 lower case letters, 33 letter sounds, and 53 simple words. Table 6 shows the actual performance of the at risk group in 5 of the 6 skill areas of this instrument. Color recognition has been omitted as insignificant since all 9 of the at risk students scored 8 out of 8 on this component. In the excluded group, 43 of 44 students also scored 8 of 8. The only student not scoring perfectly in this skill area was biligual and may have had language difficulty. This student scored 7 of 8.

Table 7

Recognition of Color, Shape, Letter and Word Components

Student (Range)	Shape (0-5)	Upper case (0-26)		Lower case (0-26)		Letter sounds (0-33)		53 words (0-53)	
		Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
#1	4	4	3	9	0	3	0	0	1	5
#2	2	5	6	19	4	18	0	0	0	2
#3	3	4	4	4	0	0	0	1	0	1
#4	2	5	3	17	0	8	0	0	0	0
#5	4	4	2	8	0	7	0	4	1	1
#6	4	4	7	13	2	8	0	5	0	3
#7	5	5	2	2	1	1	0	0	0	0
#8	3	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
#9	3	3	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean	3	4	4	9	.8	5	0	1	.2	1

Table 7 shows there has been some progress in each area. By relative comparison, recognition of upper and lower case letters are the components most improved over the shared reading time period. As might be expected, word recognition shows the least improvement. Six of the 9 students made gains in at least 3 of the areas, while the other 3 students show no improvement in any component.

The beginning of year reading interview (Appendix C) assesses 3 aspects of reading: does the child report that reading is occurring in the home, does the child have some knowledge of what reading is, and does the child believe he or she has entered into the reading process. Table 8 represents the pre and post assessment results of this interview for the 9 at risk students.

Table 8

Beginning of Year Reading Interview

Student	Home Reading		Reading Knowledge		Believes Can Read	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
#1	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y
#2	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y
#3	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y
#4	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y
#5	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N
#6	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y
#7	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y
#8	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N
#9	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
Total Y	7	9	0	6	0	6

As is illustrated in Table 8, most of the at risk students reported they were read to at home prior to the beginning of the kindergarten year. The 2 students who did not report this at the time

of pre-testing, did acknowledge it at the time of the post-testing. The more interesting finding is that prior to the shared reading experience, none of the at risk students were assessed as having knowledge of reading nor of believing they had entered into the process of reading. After the program, 6 students in each of these areas did have knowledge of reading, and did believe they were beginning readers.

In journal entries developed as this study proceeded, some additional observations are noteworthy. The phenomenon of "guessing" was noted as a particular problem for 3 of the 9 students. These students, rather than thinking of the right answer to a question, would immediately assert a response which was normally wrong. This activity appeared to be motivated by the desire to interact and to be first to respond. The teacher handled these students by asking them whether they had thought about the answer they were about to give before allowing them to give it. Two of the students improved significantly in terms of this problem, and the third improved somewhat.

Six of the 9 students had severe difficulty in focusing attention at the inception of the shared reading project. All 6 of these students showed significant improvement in their attention to the reading program. Possible causes of the improvement may have been both the shared reading artifacts such as the large and centrally displayed books, and the interactive activities which followed reading sessions.

Each of the 9 students appeared to gain a certain sense of pride with the shared reading program. During "conference time," students would assert their opinion that they had learned a word, or letter, or that they could read now. They exerted an attitude of progress.

It should also be noted that 7 of the 9 students were considered for speech and language therapy. Two of these students actually received therapy by a therapist outside of the classroom during the fall term. This is mentioned since speech problems may have a negative effect on the developement of early reading skills.

Comparison of At Risk Students to Students Excluded From the At Risk Category

Previous discussion has established that some students at the end of the kindergarten year have not developed readiness for first grade reading programs. These students lag behind the others in skills which are necessary for successful reading to begin. The measurement instruments employed in this study allow assessment of the difference in pre-reading skill levels between the group of 9 at risk students, and the group of 44 excluded students, at both the beginning and end of the shared reading period. The following analysis attempts to determine whether and in what respects shared reading may contribute to lessening the gap between the measured skill levels of these two groups.

Table 9

Comparison of Performance on Bookhandling Skills Checklist Between 9 At Risk Students, and 44 Excluded Students

Central tendency	At risk	Excluded
Mean - Pre-test	1.3	10.2
Mean - Post-test	11.7	14.5
Median - Pre-test	2.0	11.5
Median - Post-test	13.0	15.0

The mean score on the checklist of bookhandling skills increased by 10.4 for the at risk group as compared to 4.3 in the excluded group. The median increased by 11 as compared to 3.5. While this represents a healthy gain in regard to components of this checklist, a qualification needs to be made. As is apparent from the post-test median of the excluded group, over half topped out on this 15 point instrument. Thus, a ceiling came into play in the post-test measurement of this group.

In presenting comparative data from the checklist of color, shape, letter and word familiarity, "color recognition" shall again be omitted as insignificant. Table 10 represents the other 5 areas of this instrument.

Table 10

Comparison of Mean Performance on Selected Components of Checklist of Color, Shape, Letter and Word Familiarity Between 9 At Risk Students and 44 Excluded Students Before and After Shared Reading

Component pre/post	At risk	Excluded
Shape recognition / pre	3	5
Shape recognition / post	4	5
Upper case recognition / pre	4	17
Upper case recognition / post	9	22
Lower case recognition / pre	1	12
Lower case recognition / post	5	18
Letter sound recognition / pre	0	3
Letter sound recognition / post	1	9
Basic word recognition / pre	0	4
Basic word recognition / post	1	10

For all components in Table 10, the at risk group initially tested below the excluded group, although not by large margins when the ranges given in Table 7 are considered. For shape recognition, the mean of the at risk group increased by a point, while remaining the same for the excluded group. Upper case recognition showed an equal mean movement of 5 points per group. This finding may actually favor the at risk group since the average member more than doubled the number of upper case letters known, while the average excluded group member built by less than a third on this knowledge. For lower case recognition the mean increase was slightly higher in the excluded group, and for letter sounds and word recognition, it was significantly higher.

The beginning of year reading interview does not offer a basis for significant progress comparison between the 9 at risk students, and the 44 students excluded from this group. However, it is noteworthy that in the excluded group as in the at risk group, the initial interview revealed that no students believed they were participating in the reading process. Following the shared reading experience, and again like the at risk group, about two thirds believed they had now entered into reading.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the presentation and analysis of the data in this study, the at risk kindergarten students made significant progress in developing book handling skills. This is a positive finding since familiarity with books is foundational to the future reader. The only component showing no progress is the matching of spoken to written word. This component is a higher level literacy skill, and appropriate

readiness for it was not expected.

Also, in terms of bookhandling skills, the at risk students made substantial gains on the other 44 students. Whether this finding has the potential to make a contribution to closing the reading readiness gap cannot be determined, however it does point in a positive direction.

The checklist of color, shape, letter and word familiarity represents a slightly more advanced set of pre-reading components than does the checklist of bookhandling skills. The at risk students did not show significant gains on this instrument, but it may be suggested that neither did the group of 44 excluded students. The excluded group did outpace the at risk group in 2 components of this instrument: letter sound association, and basic sight vocabulary. These are higher level skills, and while slightly more developed, are not substantially developed even in this group.

The reading interview clearly demonstrated that over the course of the study both groups of students came to discover themselves as readers. While there was not significant difference between the groups, it is very significant that the self identity as a participant in the world of readers progressed from being universally absent to abundantly present.

The teacher journal entries were also significant in pointing to the developing self identity of the at risk students as readers. Most of them demonstrated a strong sense of pride in their ability to participate, and in their new self perception.

The Literature 2000 shared reading experience did substantially

contribute to the development of specific pre-reading skills as identified in this study. It can further be concluded that in important areas, the group identified as at risk moved closer to the other students in specific skill areas. However, in considering the higher level skill components such as identifying simple words, associating sounds with letters, and matching the spoken word with the written, there is no evidence that the shared reading program was effective.

Increased interaction between at risk children and successful readers might contribute to greater success for these students. Many of the conditions present during the bedtime story in the home support successful literacy development. If these conditions are replicated in the classroom, the shared reading experience may be extended and reinforced. This could be accomplished by the teacher during informal play periods, by classroom volunteers such as parents or grandparents or older students.

A shortcoming of this study was its time limitation. Some of the components measured could not realistically be expected to develop during the first few months of the kindergarten year. The shared reading format is promising, but further investigation is needed. A controlled study which would see the shared reading format through an entire kindergarten year, and perhaps into the early months of first grade, is an ambitious but worthy recommendation.

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APPENDIX A
(PRE-INTERVENTION VALUES)

OBSERVATION CHECKLIST OF BOOKHANDLING SKILLS

LFB=LOCATES FRONT OF BOOK LBB=LOCATES BACK OF BOOK LTB=LOCATES TITLE OF BOOK
LAB=LOCATES AUTHOR'S NAME NP=NOTICES PICTURES PLR=TURNS PAGES LEFT TO RIGHT
PTP=POINTS TO PRINT MLR=MOVES LEFT TO RIGHT MTB=MOVES TOP TO BOTTOM
STW=MATCHES SPOKEN TO WRITTEN RTS=RETELLS STORY PR=PRETEND READS
WT=WATCHES TEXT LS=LISTENS TO STORY ELB=ENJOYS LOOKING AT BOOKS

10/15/94

N	LFB	LBB	LTB	LAB	NP	PLR	PTP	MLR	MTB	STW	RTS	PR	WT	LS	ELB
1	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
2	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	Y
3	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N
4	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y
5	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N
6	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
7	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N
8	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
9	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y
10	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
11	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
12	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y
13	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	N
14	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
15	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
16	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	Y
17	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y
18	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	N
19	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	Y
20	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
21	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
22	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y
23	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
24	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
25	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	Y
26	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N
27	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
28	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
29	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	Y
30	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
31	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y
32	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
33	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y
34	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N
35	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
36	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
37	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
38	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N
39	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y
40	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y
41	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N
42	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
43	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
44	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N
45	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y
46	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
47	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
48	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y
49	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y
50	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y
51	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y
52	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y
53	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y

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APPENDIX A
(POST-INTERVENTION VALUES)

OBSERVATION CHECKLIST OF BOOKHANDLING SKILLS

LFB=LOCATES FRONT OF BOOK LBB=LOCATES BACK OF BOOK LTB=LOCATES TITLE OF BOOK
LAB=LOCATES AUTHOR'S NAME NP=NOTICES PICTURES PLR=TURNS PAGES LEFT TO RIGHT
PTP=POINTS TO PRINT MLR=MOVES LEFT TO RIGHT MTB=MOVES TOP TO BOTTOM
STW=MATCHES SPOKEN TO WRITTEN RTS=RETELLS STORY PR=PRETEND READS
WT=WATCHES TEXT LS=LISTENS TO STORY ELB=ENJOYS LOOKING AT BOOKS

2/03/95

N	LFB	LBB	LTB	LAB	NP	PLR	PTP	MLR	MTB	STW	RTS	PR	WT	LS	ELB
1	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
2	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
3	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
4	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
5	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
6	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
7	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
8	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
9	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
10	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
11	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
12	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
13	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
14	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y
15	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
16	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
17	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
18	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
19	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
20	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
21	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
22	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
23	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
24	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
25	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
26	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
27	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
28	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
29	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
30	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
31	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
32	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
33	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
34	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
35	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
36	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
37	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
38	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y
39	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
40	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
41	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
42	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
43	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
44	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
45	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
46	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
47	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y
48	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
49	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
50	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
51	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
52	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
53	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

APPENDIX B
(PRE-INTERVENTION VALUES)

CHECKLIST OF COLOR, SHAPE, LETTER, AND WORD RECOGNITION

N=STUDENT NUMBER CR=COLOR RECOGNITION SR=SHAPE RECOGNITION
UCL=UPPER CASE LETTER RECOGNITION LCL=LOWER CASE LETTER RECOGNITION
LS=LETTER SOUND RECOGNITION BSV=BASIC SIGHT VOCABULARY

10/15/94

N	CR	SR	UCL	LCL	LS	BSV
1	8	4	3	0	0	1
2	8	5	19	12	0	2
3	8	4	4	2	0	4
4	8	5	26	26	15	28
5	8	5	5	4	0	1
6	8	5	13	15	0	0
7	8	5	0	0	0	0
8	8	5	26	25	13	7
9	8	5	23	17	0	4
10	8	5	26	21	2	3
11	8	5	26	26	30	26
12	8	5	19	13	0	5
13	8	4	17	10	0	4
14	8	4	26	24	1	3
15	8	5	26	20	6	5
16	8	4	3	0	0	3
17	8	5	23	16	0	1
18	7	3	21	13	0	3
19	8	5	17	15	0	2
20	8	5	26	16	0	0
21	8	2	6	4	0	0
22	8	3	9	1	0	0
23	8	5	23	11	13	8
24	8	5	25	19	8	3
25	8	5	12	0	0	0
26	8	5	5	0	0	0
27	8	4	25	21	17	1
28	8	5	2	1	0	0
29	8	3	22	17	0	5
30	8	5	8	6	1	6
31	8	3	7	4	0	0
32	8	3	4	0	0	0
33	8	5	2	0	0	0
34	8	5	23	15	2	0
35	8	4	15	6	0	1
36	8	5	24	22	5	1
37	8	5	7	8	0	3
38	8	2	3	0	0	0
39	8	5	7	5	0	0
40	8	5	26	25	2	2
41	8	4	2	0	0	1
42	8	4	7	2	0	0
43	8	5	26	26	17	35
44	8	5	2	1	0	0
45	8	5	23	16	1	4
46	8	5	26	19	13	6
47	8	3	1	0	0	0
48	8	5	25	13	1	1
49	8	5	22	12	5	3
50	8	3	4	0	0	0
51	8	5	7	1	0	0
52	8	3	15	5	0	0
53	8	4	9	0	0	1

APPENDIX B
(POST-INTERVENTION VALUES)

CHECKLIST OF COLOR, SHAPE, LETTER, AND WORD RECOGNITION

N=STUDENT NUMBER CR=COLOR RECOGNITION SR=SHAPE RECOGNITION
UCL=UPPER CASE LETTER RECOGNITION LCL=LOWER CASE LETTER RECOGNITION
LS=LETTER SOUND RECOGNITION BSV=BASIC SIGHT VOCABULARY

2/03/95

N	CR	SR	UCL	LCL	LS	BSV
1	8	4	11	10	2	1
2	8	5	26	16	0	3
3	8	4	9	3	0	5
4	8	5	26	26	20	40
5	8	5	20	13	0	3
6	8	5	26	18	6	1
7	8	5	5	5	2	1
8	8	5	26	26	23	23
9	8	5	26	22	1	15
10	8	5	26	24	24	8
11	8	5	26	26	31	50
12	8	5	26	22	5	8
13	8	5	23	18	3	4
14	8	5	26	26	7	12
15	8	5	26	22	26	39
16	8	5	9	6	2	3
17	8	5	26	23	5	2
18	8	4	26	22	7	4
19	8	5	24	19	7	3
20	8	5	26	21	5	3
21	8	5	19	18	0	2
22	8	5	15	6	0	0
23	8	5	26	25	17	24
24	8	5	26	24	17	7
25	8	5	17	10	2	1
26	8	5	10	10	3	1
27	8	5	26	25	28	26
28	8	5	7	5	1	1
29	8	5	26	25	6	8
30	8	5	22	6	4	8
31	8	5	17	15	3	0
32	8	4	4	0	1	1
33	8	5	8	5	3	5
34	8	5	26	20	6	2
35	8	5	22	11	5	2
36	8	5	26	25	14	4
37	8	5	19	14	5	4
38	8	5	17	8	0	0
39	8	5	22	17	5	2
40	8	5	26	26	20	22
41	8	4	8	7	4	1
42	8	4	13	8	5	3
43	8	5	26	26	31	50
44	8	5	5	3	0	0
45	8	5	26	26	8	7
46	8	5	26	26	23	15
47	8	5	1	0	0	1
48	8	5	26	18	6	4
49	8	5	18	17	10	5
50	8	4	9	6	1	4
51	8	5	14	10	1	1
52	8	5	25	19	0	1
53	8	5	20	8	1	1

Appendix C

Reading Interview

Name of Child_____Date_____

A. General warm-up questions
   1. What are some of the things that you like to do?
   2. What are some of the things that you can do well?
   3. What kinds of stories do you like best?
   4. What is your favorite book or story?

B. Being read to at home
   1. Are you read stories at home?
   2. How many a day?
   3. Who reads to you?
   4. When are you usually read to?
   5. Who picks the stories?
   6. What do you do while you are being read to?

C. General reading knowledge
   1. What is reading?
   2. Who do you see who reads? What are they reading?
   3. Why do people read?

D. The child's reading
   1. Can you read? Tell me about it. (If the child answers yes, ask questions 2-9. If the child answers no, ask questions 10-12.)
   2. What can you read?
   3. When did you learn to read?
   4. How did you learn to read?
   5. Did someone help you learn to read or did you learn by yourself?
   6. When you are reading and you come to something you don't know, what do you do?
   7. What goes on in your head when you read?
   8. Can you read a book you have never read before?
   9. Was it easy or hard to learn to read?
   10. What do you do when you look at books?
   11. Can you tell in your own words the story of a book you know?
   12. Will it be easy or hard to learn to read?

(Fisher, p. 172-173)

Appendix D

Saint Xavier University
Consent to Participate in a Research Study
"Assessing and Developing Reading Readiness in the
Kindergarten Student"

The purpose of this project is to study certain aspects of skill development in preparing kindergarten students for first grade reading programs. This project may, in the future, help educators identify more effective techniques for teaching reading skills. Refusal to give permission for the use of anonymous and confidential data as described above will in no way effect any child's education at Willard School.

I am informed that all kindergarten students at Willard School and in the U-46 District will be taught reading skills through use of the Literacy 2000 Reading Resource program; and that my child's teacher, Irma Jane Beach, who is currently pursuing a graduate degree at Xavier University, may use data relating to my child's progress in this program as a part of her research project at Xavier.

I understand that the use of this data will be anonymous and confidential, that is, the study design assures that no information presented to Saint Xavier University will identify or be tracable to any individual student in the Willard kindergarten class.

I acknowledge that I am aware that I may request more information about this study from Mrs. Beach and that I may withdraw my permission to use this data at any time. I also understand that I may keep a copy of this consent form for my own information.

_____ _____

Signature of Parent - Guardian Date